

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 4: Assessment (Investigation)	Effective Date: July 1, 2007
	Section 23: Risk Assessment	Version: 1

POLICY **[REVISED]**

OLD POLICIES: 205.47; 205.51

- The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will conduct a risk assessment to determine appropriate service levels **after** arriving at a finding of “substantiated” (or the appropriate community services referrals **after** arriving at a finding of “indicated”).
- DCS will **not** conduct a risk assessment to help arrive at a finding.
- **[POLICY CHANGE]** DCS will not **substantiate** allegations based on the results of a risk assessment. (i.e. DCS will not conduct a risk assessment for the purposes of deciding between a finding of “substantiated” vs. “unsubstantiated.”)

See also related policy, [Making an Assessment \(Investigation\) Finding](#)

Code References

- [IC 31-9-2-58.5 “Indicated”](#)
- [IC 31-33-20-2\(2\) Components](#)

PROCEDURE

The FCM will complete the following after arriving at an assessment (investigation) finding of “substantiated” or if unsure whether to “indicate” or “unsubstantiate”:

- Answer all questions on the Indiana Family Risk Assessment of Abuse /Neglect tool.
- Determine the overall **risk level** based on the highest of either the abuse score or the neglect score.

The FCM will complete the Indiana Family Strengths and Needs Assessment within five (5) days of completing the Family Risk Assessment. See separate policy, [Strengths and Needs Assessment](#).

RELATED INFORMATION

General

The risk assessment is the companion piece to the strengths and needs assessment. Together, they enable DCS to effectively determine the appropriate service level. (See separate policy, [Determining Service Levels](#)). The two assessments systematically identify critical family problems, and conversely, strengths that may mitigate problems.

Indicated Abuse/Neglect

The likelihood of future abuse/neglect is a factor that should be used by the FCM when deciding between making a finding of “indicated” or “unsubstantiated.” If risk is assessed to be on the high end of the scale, and:

(a) the evidence is such that it leads one to believe that abuse/neglect has probably occurred, regardless of whether it can be proven; or
(b) abuse/neglect is likely to occur; i.e., the provision of services is called for to reduce the risk of abuse/neglect;
“indicate” and proceed with development of a safety plan for service provision.

Risk of Abuse vs. Risk of Neglect

Because different family dynamics are present in abuse situations than in neglect situations, separate scales are used on the risk assessment tool to assess the future probability of both abuse and neglect.

Completing the Assessment

Both scales, abuse and neglect, are completed regardless of the type of allegation(s) or substantiated/indicated type(s) of maltreatment. The FCM must make every effort during the assessment (investigation) to obtain the information needed to answer every question. However, if information cannot be obtained to answer a particular question, that question should be scored as “0.”

Determining Overall Risk Level

Scores are totaled separately for the abuse scale and the neglect scale and the higher of the two scores is used to determine the risk level as in the chart below:

Neglect Score	Abuse Score	Risk Level
0 – 4	0 – 3	LOW
5 – 7	4 – 6	MODERATE
8 – 12	7 – 10	HIGH
13 – 20	11 – 17	VERY HIGH

Risk Levels

The difference between the risk levels is substantial. High-risk families have significantly higher rates of subsequent referral and substantiation than lower risk families. Higher risk families are also more often involved in serious abuse and/or neglect incidents.

FORMS AND TOOLS

- Family Risk Assessment – Available in ICWIS